

Fort Totten
Restoration Advisory Board (RAB)
Meeting

Meeting Date: Monday, 2 December 1996

Meeting Location: The Adria Hotel and Conference Center

Meeting Time: 6:00 p.m.

The U.S. Army was represented by the following:

Mr. Andrew Ruppert, Chief, Environmental Division, NYAC & Fort Hamilton

Mr. Peter Koutroubis, BRAC Environmental Coordinator, NYAC & Fort
Hamilton

Ms. Linda Duncan, Base Transition Coordinator and Deputy Commander

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Region II representative Mr. John DeMurley was unable to attend this evening due to medical reasons.

New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (NYSDEC) was represented by Mr. Dave Harrington.

The RAB members in attendance:

Tony Avella

Jack Fein

Robert LoPinto

George Lawrence

Carol Marian

Donald Oral

Lawrence Ordine

Lawrence Pavane

Edmund Rowan

Joyce Shepard

Frank Skala

Stanley Speirs

Geraldine Spinella

Arnold Wagner

The RAB members absent:

Owen Bernstein

Meeting Convened: 6:14 p.m.

Meeting Adjourned: 8:43 p.m.

The following items were discussed:

1. Opening Comments: A folder was given to RAB members containing the agenda and a copy of the revised draft charter. The minutes from the November 4 meeting were not prepared due to the Army receiving the court reporter's notes just before Thanksgiving. As soon as the minutes are drawn up they will be mailed out to RAB members. RAB members introduced themselves.

a. Mr. Koutroubis went over the purpose of the RAB. The purpose of the RAB is to provide a forum for the community and RAB members to provide advice, make comments to the decision makers, and participate in the BRAC environmental restoration process



with the BRAC Cleanup Team (BCT). The BCT is the decision making body for the Fort Totten environmental restoration process. The BCT consists of a representative from the U.S. Army, Mr. Koutroubis, a representative from the NYSDEC, Mr. Dave Harrington and a representative from the EPA Region II, Mr. John DeMurley. Mr. DeMurley was unable to attend because he is out on extended leave for medical reasons.

b. Several RAB members have requested that representatives from the Coast Guard and the Reserves attend the RAB meetings. Mr. Koutroubis has been in touch with the Coast Guard's representative, Ms. Rachel Marino. The Coast Guard will be setting up their own Restoration Advisory Board to address environmental issues on Fort Totten Coast Guard property. As far as a representative from the Reserve enclave, the Reserves are presently tenants on Fort Totten, the enclave is a proposed Reserve enclave. The Reserves don't have responsibility for areas such as the pond and landfill. Those issues are still handled by the environmental office at Fort Hamilton, specifically Mr. Andrew Ruppert, Chief of the Environmental Division. He will be attending RAB meetings to address Army issues outside of BRAC property. The Reserves will be invited but their knowledge of the environmental issues will be limited.

c. Mr. Fein stated that there were 8 people from Tetra Tech on Fort Totten. Mr. Koutroubis added that Tetra Tech is there to conduct an Archeological Survey and Historical Building Survey.

d. The Army Corps of Engineers, St. Louis District, prepared the Archives Search Report for Unexploded Ordnance (UXO). In the future the RAB has the option to request a presentation from St. Louis District on how the UXO report was prepared and how the findings came about.

e. Mr. Rowan asked about the US Coast Guard (USCG) property. Mr. Koutroubis explained that the USCG setting up a RAB and working with the Corps of Engineers to come up with a plan to do further investigations. Mr. Ordine questioned who will be addressing the Coast Guard problem. Mr. Koutroubis said the Army Corps of Engineers handles Formerly Used Defense Sites (FUDS) and they will work with the Coast Guard to deal with the problems there. Mr. Ordine asked who is doing the sampling on BRAC property. Mr. Koutroubis stated that testing is currently being conducted by ICF Kaiser. Tests are being conducted on BRAC property adjacent to the Coast Guard property as well as the rest of the BRAC property. The first round of sampling is almost complete and results are expected by the third week in January.

2. RAB Charter: Mr. Lopinto brought up the revised draft RAB charter for discussion. Mr. Koutroubis made some changes to the charter after he received comments from RAB members. These changes were discussed with the temporary co-chair, Mr. LoPinto, over the phone. Mr. Koutroubis went over each of the changes. RAB members discussed the changes at some length then agreed to them with a few other changes and additions.

The motions to change the RAB charter are as follows:

- On a motion made by Mr. Lopinto, the first sentence in Voting (section XVI) was changed to read "One half of the Board membership plus one member shall constitute

a quorum for all voting of the Board. A simple majority of those present is necessary to carry a motion."

- On a motion made by Mr. Wagner, an addition will be made to invite "Representatives of the U.S. Coast Guard and U.S. Army Reserve to attend all RAB meetings so that concerns regarding contiguous areas can be officially addressed."
- On a motion made by Mr. LoPinto the RAB approved the addition of a third sub-committee to Section VII, a Member Selection Sub-Committee.
- On a motion made by Mr. LoPinto a vote was taken and the RAB Charter was approved as it stands with the three additions.

Selection of Community Co-Chair:

- Ms. Spinella made a motion to nominate Mr. Larry Ordine. Mr. Avella made a motion to nominate Mr. Robert LoPinto. A vote was taken and Mr. Ordine was selected to serve as Community Co-Chair.

Sub-Committee Members: Mr. Ordine asked for volunteers to work on the different committees. The Member Selection Sub-Committee will be formed when it is needed.

- Document Review Sub-Committee: This committee is comprised of six members: Mr. Ordine, Mr. Oral, Mr. Pavane, Mr. LoPinto, Ms. Marion, and Mr. Speirs.
- Community Public Relations Sub-Committee: This committee is comprised of three members: Mr. Ordine, Ms. Spinella, and Mr. Skala.

Mr. Ordine asked if anyone had any objections to him rewriting the RAB Charter. No one did.

3. Environmental Issues:

a. Mr. Koutroubis summarized the findings of the EBS and the UXO Archives Search Report. The EBS has identified areas of concern that need to be further evaluated on BRAC property. These areas are outlined on the map in the EBS. The BCT has come up with a sampling protocol, they will evaluate the results and decide on a further course of action.

b. The UXO Archive Search Report is summarized on a map (plate 12). There are three areas on BRAC property where there is a potential for buried UXO. Work is ongoing to clear these three areas for UXO. The St. Louis District Corps of Engineers came up with the report and is coordinating with Huntsville District Corps of Engineers. Huntsville is the center of expertise when it comes to UXO. They will have a scope of work for a contractor. The contractor will go on site with detection devices. Whatever is detected will be flagged. Then they have another protocol on how to go about the excavation of the UXO.

c. A yellow area on the UXO map was pointed out as a FUDS site. BRAC money cannot be spent on this area of Fort Totten. It is unknown at this time who presently owns the property. Mr. Koutroubis said he will check into it.

d. Mr. Ordine read from a book by William C. Gains, Fort Totten and The Coast Defenses of Eastern New York. He read a paragraph that claims about sixty-three acres of land was added to Fort Totten when New York Department of Sanitation filled in a marsh with garbage and refuse.

e. Mr. Koutroubis said he sent sampling results from the landfill to Mr. Harrington. These results were obtained from a series of ground water monitoring wells placed on the suspected landfill area back in the late 1980's. Most of the landfill area is on non-BRAC property. Mr. Koutroubis asked Mr. Harrington if he has been able to identify any specific area on the landfill that is a current issue of concern to the State. Mr. Harrington responded he has not found anything in the documents that would indicate any hazards at this point. He is in contact with the engineering firm doing the sampling on the non-BRAC portions of the landfill. He has requested samples of sediments of Little Neck Bay, and tests in the pond area. At this point he has not received a response. He said there is nothing at this time that needs to be addressed immediately. Mr. Koutroubis asked Mr. Harrington to explain to the RAB how the BCT is going to address the BRAC areas that have a potential for contamination. Mr. Harrington replied that based on preliminary reports by Hill Environmental, the reports don't contain a lot of detail but they give a good indication of areas of concern. Based on the Hill report and the archive searches that were done, the BCT decided on areas that needed further study. These areas are reflected in the EBS. We are taking sediment samples on BRAC portions adjacent to the Coast Guard property that will address whether or not contamination has reached the beach area.

f. Mr. Speirs asked what standard the State is referencing. Mr. Harrington responded that the state uses soil TAGM 4046 (Technical and Administrative Guidance Memorandum). This is the soil cleanup guidance document. Mr. Speirs said the standards were applicable to industrial sites. Mr. Harrington replied that it is soil cleanup guidance. Depending on the site the State has the ability to tailor the cleanup to fit the needs of whatever the site will be used for. Mr. Harrington had copies of NYS Ambient Water Quality Standards and Guidance Values, which the RAB will be interested in looking at once samples are back. The sediment will be sampled in Little Neck Bay. A TCLP (Toxicity Characteristic Leaching Procedure) will be run on samples where elevated levels of contaminants are found to determine what is hazardous waste. If the TCLP fails then it is considered hazardous waste and the State will take it from there. If it doesn't fail the TCLP but levels of contamination seem elevated then Fish and Wildlife or the Commission of Water may have other requirements.

g. Mr. Speirs mentioned his concern with UXO and documentation for disposal of munitions over a long period of time, prior to RCRA disposal regulations. He asked what would be a prudent program for sampling for ordnance of that age. Mr. Harrington replied that he was not that familiar with UXO so his first concern is with worker safety. The areas where drilling will take place has been screened and was cleared with a magnetometer.

h. Mr. Ordine recommended the landfill be capped to prevent any further leaching into Little Neck Bay. Ms. Shepard asked how much time there is before BRAC property is turned over to the community. Mr. Harrington said the property can not be transferred

until all environmental issues are addressed. Mr. Koutroubis added that the environmental restoration process can take years.

h. Mr. Speirs asked about statistical sampling for UXO. Mr. Koutroubis replied that this will be handled by the center of expertise for UXO which is Huntsville District Corps of Engineers. They have a protocol on clearing those parcels for UXO. As soon as we have more information it will be shared with the RAB.

i. Mr. Speirs said the Document Review Committee would like to see work plans before the work begins. He asked about the sampling that has already taken place. Mr. Harrington replied the information is in the EBS. Mr. Koutroubis went over it. He pointed out on the map where all the ground water monitoring wells will be installed on BRAC property, a total of 11. In addition to looking at the ground water, soil samples will be taken throughout the area.

j. Mr. LoPinto asked about sampling the landfill. Mr. Koutroubis explained ground water will be sampled first before the soil sampling to try and pinpoint any contamination. Mr. Ordine recommended a bore sample. The BCT will discuss the recommendation of bore samples. Mr. LoPinto asked what has been done so far to identify drums buried in the landfill. Mr. Koutroubis stated that there is no indication from past sampling of buried drums. He pointed out an area on the land fill which recently had construction. It was dug up when the Reserve Center was built and there was no indication of any refuse or drums. Regardless of the work done in the past, the Army will look into it.

k. Mr. Ordine proposed that the RAB recommend:

- * The Army take bore samples in addition to ground water samples on the landfill site.
- * NYSDEC reopen the former sampling wells installed by the Army Hygiene Agency and Hill Environmental for additional samples.
- * The RAB be advised of future sampling and cleanup plans before the work takes place

l. Ms. Shepard asked if the all the property to be leased by the Fire Dept. has been tested. Mr. Harrington replied that the tests are being conducted now on areas of concern, not all of the property. He went on to say that if every inch of the property is tested they would run out of money and not get any answers. One of the provisions in the lease is that property within areas of concern are not included in the lease. There is to be no subsurface work conducted by the Fire Dept. in these areas.

m. Mr. Wagner brought up the fact that there was some confusion as to what the actual acreage is on Fort Totten. The number of acres conflicted in several of the documents. Mr. Koutroubis said that the numbers are approximate and the reports will be updated as more accurate information becomes available.

n. Mr. Wagner asked if the RAB needs to be concerned about financial constraints with the environmental work that needs to be done. Mr. Koutroubis tried to explain how the funding works. The numbers are just projections. Funds are requested based on an estimate of what you expect the cost to be if all the sites require remediation. In reality not all the sites will require cleanup but until you know which ones do, you request funding for all sites to have money programmed for the sites that will require funding. The funding issue will be addressed by the RAB. At the next meeting information will be provided on spending in fiscal year 1996. We are now in fiscal year 1997 but the budget is not available at this time. BRAC fiscal year (FY) 95 money has all been spent. Fort Totten had an ongoing non-BRAC Installation Restoration Program (IRP) under the

direction of Fort Hamilton and New York Area Command. Most of the 95 funding except what it cost for the EBS was from non-BRAC IRP funding. The BCP contains a table that shows the funding obligated in FY 96. In FY 96 money was obligated toward the first round of sampling. FY 97 funds are estimates.

o. Ms. Spinella asked if the lease has been signed by the Fire Dept. and asked if the RAB deliberations are in anyway delaying the process. Mr. Koutroubis replied that the lease has not yet been signed. The RAB process will not affect the lease to the Fire Department.

Ms. Shepard asked when the next meeting would be. Mr. Koutroubis replied at the end of January or early February after the sampling results are received.

Community Member Questions:

a. Katie Ramirez from The Bayside Times asked Mr. Harrington if the information he has received is sufficient to proceed with the environmental testing. Mr. Harrington responded that it is adequate in the sense that it gave the BCT a starting point for areas of concern in order to begin sampling.

b. Mr. Ordine requested the sampling plans that are being used now. Mr. Koutroubis will provide the BRAC sampling plan.

c. Ms. Ramirez spoke with the Deputy Commissioner Dolan of the Fire Dept. He said as soon as the lease is signed with the Army they will be moving interim lease groups onto the fort. Are there any environmental concerns that these groups should be aware of? Mr. Koutroubis responded that any areas identified in the EBS with the potential for contamination have been made very clear in the leasing document. The areas that have potential for contamination are not being leased and these areas will be made known to the Fire Dept. There are also provisions in the lease which state no sub-surface or intrusive work is to take place in these areas.

d. Mr. Fein stated that through the courtesy of Mr. Rowan and the Eastern Paralyzed Veterans Association all RAB members will be getting copies of the History of Fort Totten.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:43 p.m.